

*Abraham Lincoln* 416,417  
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**AN ILLUSTRATED MAGAZINE**

1865

**FOR BOYS AND GIRLS.**

EDITED BY

J. T. TROWBRIDGE, GAIL HAMILTON, AND LUCY LARCOM.

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## ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

THERE is no reader of this magazine too small or too young to have heard and to understand that Abraham Lincoln, sixteenth President of the United States of America, has been removed from this life by an act as awful and wicked as any that history records, and that his loss has given the whole country cause for mourning deep and long, — mourning in which all right-minded persons have joined with as honest a feeling as if by his departure from earthly life they had been deprived of a personal friend. And the Editors cannot let this solemn occasion pass without a few words of comment, which shall both express their sense of the shame and suffering inflicted upon our land by that appallingly bad young man, John Wilkes Booth, the murderer, and shall also hint to the youth whom they address, through all this broad continent, the true lesson to be derived from the career of him who has passed from this world in the very moment of his highest honor and his greatest influence.

Many a boy — and many a girl, too, doubtless — has wondered or asked how Mr. Lincoln came to be so great, and why he was so esteemed. This is the question to which these brief paragraphs will suggest the solution. A little magazine like this is not able to give a biography of the man, nor is it the place for a review of his traits of character or a eulogy upon his virtues, — such themes are reserved for the pages of historians and the writings of wise men; we can only draw one simple inference, and urge one plain reflection.

The inference of this grave event is this, — *that Abraham Lincoln was great because he was good.* From his boyhood he tried to be faithful to the duty of every hour as it came; he tried to discover what was really right, and to hold fast to it; he was eager to learn what was the truth of any matter, and what in justice should be done concerning it; in any doubtful question he became the advocate of that cause which his conscience and his principles told him ought to prevail; he was humble in spirit, willing to profit by the advice of other men, ready to acknowledge and to atone for a fault if he had committed one; above all, he was pious enough and brave enough to own his dependence upon the good and mighty God, who sitteth in the heavens ruling wisely, — whom men are too apt to forget when they become powerful and prosperous, — and in all his dealings, even with wicked and rebellious people, he endeavored to be lenient, as the Lord himself is lenient toward all the earth, remembering ever the gracious sentiment Shakespeare has expressed in these beautiful lines, wherein he is speaking of mercy: —

"It is an attribute to God himself;  
And earthly power doth then show likest God's,  
When mercy seasons justice."

Therefore others respected, admired, and trusted him, good men sympathized with him, and bad men feared lest his clear, searching gaze should find out



their evil, although cunningly concealed; and therefore, now that he is gone from us, a nation with great grief has followed his body to the tomb, believes with loving confidence that his true spirit has been welcomed above with the glorious words, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord," and will perpetuate his memory with grateful enthusiasm to remotest years.

The reflection, young readers and friends, is *not* that you are to imitate this pure and noble exemplar because reward and honor flowed in upon him, but *that you are to seek to do right because it is right in the eyes of your Heavenly Father*, whose kindness gives you all that you have, whose watchful providence is about you ever, and to whom you are responsible for all that you think and say and do. There is no real merit in an action which is inspired by the certainty or the hope of a recompense; in such an action there is only self-love, because the doer of it expects that, although he may make some sacrifice at the time, he will yet receive a return greater than that, and so have a profit after all. No boy should think that the lives of great men who have risen from lowliness teach him to follow in their footsteps for the sake of winning their eminence,—to be patient, hard-working, studious, self-denying, and honest, in order to become a general, a cabinet-officer, an admiral, a rich merchant, or a President; such lives teach him to cultivate these qualities because they are necessary to complete manhood, and to the development of his human soul. Abraham Lincoln never permitted himself to dwell upon high and shining station as the future result of his steady, persevering labors, whether as farmer, lawyer, Congressman, or as head of the government of our vast United States. He earnestly gave his efforts to improving all the goodness and strength of his nature, in order to be as perfect a man as he could; he upheld with all his might what he became convinced he ought, as a patriotic, Christian man, to uphold, without regard to the worldly consequences that might affect him on account of such support; and he always put aside all personal considerations and selfish desires, and, in prayerful reliance upon the Almighty and All-wise Ruler, sought the real good of those whom he had been appointed to govern,—meeting his death, at last, in a great public assembly whither he had gone, not for his own pleasure, but because his presence had been promised, and his generous heart feared lest disappointment should follow his absence. Henceforward his name and his deeds will be recounted with those of Washington, and his consistent uprightness will be a teacher and a model.

So let us leave him now, remembering that he is at peace where no turmoil or trial of men in labor and passion can reach and afflict him, and never forgetting that the grand and holy moral of his pure and simple life—which we reverently believe his silent lips would relate to you all, dear young Americans, if they could once more speak—is this: *Do good, and love to do it, not for pleasure or reward, but because it is right before the eternal God; avoid all evil, and love to avoid it, not for fear or on account of punishment, but because it is sinful before the Lord, and fit only for the Devil and his angels.*

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\*.\* All letters respecting the Magazine should be addressed to the Publishers;

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